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## A Soviet agent?

# Mysterious Oswald trip

(First in a series.)

By JOHN KEPLINGER

It was a day not unlike so many other late summer days in Los Angeles. Sept. 10, 1959, was warm and sticky. The sky was brown with smog, and there was just a hint of autumn in the air.

Newspaper headlines on the courthouse steps told of the Dodgers clinching their first National League pennant since moving to the West Coast.

Inside the building, a slight, pale 20-year-old Marine private was applying for a passport. He wasn't concerned with the weather or the Dodgers. He was in a hurry.

### HARDSHIP CASE

The next day was to be his last in uniform. He was to be placed on inactive reserve status, for his was a hardship case. His ailing mother needed him at home in Fort Worth, Texas.

Cautious, then, that he was applying for a passport.

He completed the passport application forms, then raised his right hand and began reciting the required oath: "I, Lee Harvey Oswald, swear..."

### FOUR YEARS LATER

It was another warm, sunny day in late November four years later. The locale was different. Now, the sun was bright over Dallas. The Dodgers had won another pennant, but this time the newspaper headlines told of a more important event:

President John F. Kennedy

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was making a rare, personal visit to the thriving Texas community.

Dallas was in a festive mood. Thousands of enthusiastic well-wishers lined the route of the President's motorcade. But there was one among them who was not a party to the gaiety.

### HE SAT ALONE

He sat alone near a window on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository, and like the milling, happy throngs below he waited. But there was no smile on his face.

Lee Harvey Oswald was in a hurry again.

Four years had passed since Oswald obtained a passport in Los Angeles. What occurred during that relatively short time span? Where did Oswald go? What did he do?

A young Marine applying for a passport... a shadowy figure lurking in ambush. What is the secret of those mysterious four years in the life of Lee Harvey Oswald?

### SOME ANSWERS

Edward Ellis Smith of Palo Alto, a former security intelligence officer for the Army, State Department and Central Intelligence Agency who spent many years in Moscow, has provided some plausible answers to the Oswald riddle.

He has analyzed the known facts about Oswald and interpreted them in light of his special training and experience. After tracing Oswald's movements those four years, Smith has concluded the ex-Marine was a trained Soviet agent.

But when he allegedly triggered the shots that fateful day in Dallas that took the life of the President of the United States, Oswald was acting alone and not on orders of the Kremlin, Smith believes.

The act was committed, he adds, by someone who obviously was mentally unbalanced.

### OWN CONCLUSIONS

Smith emphasizes his conclusions are his own. He had no outside assistance from former associates in the government or any classified information. His

findings have not been substantiated by the Warren Commission, the FBI or the Secret Service.

Smith, who was the State Department's first full-time security officer at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, begins tracking Oswald's movements that smoggy day in Los Angeles.

His passport approved, Oswald returned to the Tustin Marine Air Base. The next day, Sept. 11, 1959, he received his "hardship" discharge and returned home to Fort Worth.

He didn't stay there very long.

### ON FREIGHTER

On about Oct. 1, a freighter steamed out of the harbor at New Orleans into the gulf on its way to Europe. Oswald was one of the passengers aboard.

Two weeks later, Oswald, now an avowed American defector, was in Moscow. On Oct. 15, after only two days in what Smith describes as a "new environment... an unknown, gigantic, unnerving city," Oswald petitioned the Supreme Soviet, the highest legislative body, for Soviet citizenship.

This was a "remarkable" event, in Smith's judgment. He explains, "Oswald must have known to whom his petition was to be addressed. Someone must have helped him in preparing the petition's Russian or English text... he was being chaperoned by someone, and that someone must have been in-

structed to suggest that he ask for Soviet citizenship, a step unlikely to occur to an inexperienced, young American boy."

After the petition was filed, there was a lull of about two weeks. Smith theorizes that during this time a typical inter-service dispute was raging behind the Kremlin walls.

On the one hand, Soviet propagandists were urging that the young, ex-Marine's defection be exploited for obvious propaganda purposes.

On the other, intelligence operators were arguing Oswald's value to the Communist cause did not lie in a short lived propaganda stunt... that to renounce his American citizenship would be stupid and would hurt his future usefulness.

While the dispute raged on, Oswald waited restlessly in his Metropole Hotel room in Moscow, venturing forth only occasionally to see the sights.

Perhaps he was thinking over the events of the past few weeks. Smith is convinced those events reveal Oswald had Soviet connections long before his Marine discharge, probably dating back to his tour of duty in the late 1950s.

The swiftness with which Oswald's passport and visa application were processed by the Soviet Embassy in Washington the time of his discharge and his sailing from New Orleans, in less than two weeks, between demonstrates to Smith that "the wheels had been greased."

He believes the Russian Embassy had information before hand... information to "fear" Oswald without any delay.

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